

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 /030 W  
-----121722Z 064403 /42

R 121403Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO USDOC WASHDC  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3068  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 3022

ATHENS FOR RTDO; USDOC FOR BIC/CAGNE/BECK AND OIM/SAD RENBORG

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: BEXP SY  
SUBJ: PETROCHEMICAL TRADE MISSION: DAMASCUS WRAP UP

1. SUMMARY: MISSION COMPLETED MAY 9 SUCCESSFUL THREE WORKING-DAY VISIT TO SYRIA. SINCE DAMASCUS WAS MISSION'S LAST STOP, MEMBERS DEPARTED SYRIA INDIVIDUALLY, BUT THREE STAYED ON TO FOLLOW UP SALES AND PROJECT LEADS. SEVERAL MEMBERS REMARKED THAT SYRIA WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL STOP OF TOUR BECAUSE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRY HERE IS STILL IN FEASIBILITY STUDY STAGE AND AMERICAN COMPANIES HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP SHAPE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL INDUSTRY AND MAXIMIZE TRADE OPPORTUNITIES DOWNSTREAM. END SUMMARY.

2. ITINERARY: MISSION ARRIVED ON SCHEDULE FRIDAY, MAY 6. SINCE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICES WERE CLOSED, DAY'S ACTIVITIES WERE LIMITED TO BRIEFING AT EMBASSY BY CHARGE, AID MISSION DIRECTOR, AND E/C OFFICERS. ON SATURDAY MISSION TOURED OIL REFINERY AND NITROGEN FERTILIZER PLANT IN HOMS, 165KMS NORTH OF DAMASCUS. CHARGE GAVE RECEPTION FOR MISSION THAT NIGHT AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE; ABOUT 150 TURNED OUT DESPITE UNCLASSIFIED

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MARTYRS' DAY HOLIDAY (GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED) SATURDAY, AND MISSION MEMBERS MADE VALUABLE CONTACTS, ESPECIALLY IN PRIVATE SECTOR. ON SUNDAY, MEMBERS CALLED ON MINISTER OF ECONOMY IMADI AND MET WITH SENIOR MINISTER OF INDUSTRY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MINISTER SEIFO. DR IMADI GAVE A DINNER FOR THE MISSION THAT EVENING. MONDAY WAS SPENT MOSTLY WITH MINISTRY OF PETROEUM AND MINERAL RESOURCES OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MINISTER

DARWISH, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SYRIAN PETROEUM COMPANY, AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS IN PETROCHEMICAL FIELD. MISSION MEMBERS SPENT SUNDAY AND MONDAY AFTERNOONS IN INDIVIDUAL VISITS WITH PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN.

3. RESULTS: --HOOKER CHEMICALS: INTERVIEWED POSSIBLE AGENTS BUT DID NOT APPOINT ONE; INTERESTED IN POSSIBLE CONTRACT FOR SALE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR CHLORINE PLANT ASSOCIATED WITH PAPER MILL; WILL RETURN TO SYRIA TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES.

--INTERNATIONAL MINERALS AND CHEMICAL CORP: INTERVIEWED SIX OR SEVEN POTENTIAL AGENTS; SAW NUMEROUS TRADE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SALE OF PRODUCTS, TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND EXPORT SERVICES (NOT INTERESTED IN BIDDING ON TENDERS), ESPECIALLY IN DESULFURIZATION OF PETROLEUM COKE, CAUSTIC CHLORINE PLANT, SOPHISTICATED PHOSPHATE-BASED FERTILIZERS; THINK OPIC AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA (SIGNED LAST AUGUST) WILL CONTRIBUTE TO US INVESTMENT HERE; FOUND SYRIA MOST INTERESTING OF FOUR COUNTRIES VISITED ON TOUR BECAUSE OF AGREEABLE CULTURAL CLIMATE, RAW MATERIALS, ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL BASE, AND SUBSTANTIAL AGRICULTURE; WILL RECOMMEND TO FIRM TO SEND TECHNICAL TEAM TO SYRIA IF INVITED BY SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. IMC REP ALSO CALLED ON ARAB LEAGUE CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICIALS (SEPTTEL).

-- DAVY POWERGAS: STRONG POSSIBILITIES IN BASIC FERTILIZERS, PETROCHEMICAL PLANT (FAR DOWNSTREAM), SOLVING PROBLEM OF DUST CARRYOVER IN REFINERY, USE OF EXCESS AMMONIA IN NITROGEN UNCLASSIFIED

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FERTILIZER PLANT, COKE DESULFURIZATION (CLOSE TIE WITH IMC INTERESTS STATED ABOVE), POLYESTHER FIBRE TEXTILE PLANT, PESTICIDES PLANT; PROBABLY WILL RETURN TO SYRIA TO FOLLOW UP AND WILL SEND REP FROM GERMAN AFFILIATE ZIMMER TO PURSUE TEXTILE INTEREST. ALTHOUGH COMPANY HAS BID UNSUCCESSFULLY ON PAST SYRIAN PROJECTS, DAVY REP SAID HE WAS "NOT MUCH INTERESTED" IN SYRIA UNTIL COMING HERE-- NOW HE SEES REAL POSSIBILITIES.

--MARSHALL EXPORT CORP: APPOINTED NO AGENT; POSSIBLE 10,000DOLS IN SALES LEADS (MARSHALL REP LEFT EARLY AND BEFORE REVIEW WITH EMBASSY COMOFF).

--FARREL CO. DIVISION/USM CORP: WILL NOT APPOINT AGENT, BUT ESTABLISHED IMPORTANT CONTACTS; SEES POSSIBLE 300,000DOLS IN EQUIPMENT SALES TO RUBBER AND PLASTICS PLANTS.

--ROCKBESTOS: APPOINTED LOCAL AGENT AND INVITED HIM TO VISIT US PLANT; SEES VERY STRONG SALES POSSIBILITIES OF CABLES TO

REFINERY, FERTILIZER PLANTS, PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX AND  
OFFICE BUILDINGS; WILL PROPOSE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN  
FOR LOCAL CABLE PLANT; CALLED DAMASCUS "MOST SUCCESSFUL STOP"  
ON TOUR.

--KING NUTRONICS CORP: DECIDED NOT TO APPOINT AGENT; PROSPECTS  
OF 30,000DOLS IN SALES TO HOMS REFINERY, NITROGEN FERTILIZER  
PLANT AND SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES; SEES SYRIA AS "MOST  
PROMISING LONG-TERM MARKET OF FOUR COUNTRIES VISITED" ON TOUR,  
BUT REAL POSSIBILITIES FOR HIS TESTING AND CALIBRATION SYSTEMS  
ARE ONE-THREE YEARS AWAY.

--AIR PRODUCTS AND CHEMICALS/HOUDRY DIVISION: SYRIA MOST  
SUCCESSFUL STOP ON TOUR BECAUSE PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX IS STILL  
IN PLANNING STAGE, WHERE FIRM CAN SELL AND INSTALL TECHNOLOGICAL  
PROCESSES, AND WILL BE NAPHTHA-FED (COMPANY'SPECIALTY); WILL  
PUT TOGETHER A PROPOSAL AND RETURN TO SYRIA FOR PRESENTATION  
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TO MINPET OFFICIALS.

--NORTHERN ENGINEERS AND CONSTRUCTORS: VERY STRONG  
POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING MANAGEMENT AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES (NOT  
INVESTMENT) FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF 5000HA. PLOT IN  
EUPHRATES BASIN (REP ESTIMATES TOTAL VALUE OF PROJECT AT  
100M. DOLS. COMMENTS: THIS FIGURE APPEAQRS GROSSLY EXAGGERATED);  
NORTHERN REPS REMAINED IN DAMASCUS AFTER MISSION'S DEPARTURE,  
WILL RETURN MAY 18 FOR ONE MONTH STAY, HAVE TAKEN OFFICE  
SPACE IN DAMASCUS AND OPENED DOLLAR ACCOUNT IN COMMERCIAL  
BANK.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 /030 W  
-----121721Z 064725 /40  
R 121403Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO USDOC WASHDC  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3069

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

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ATHENS FOR RTDO; USDOC FOR BIC/CAGNE/BECK AND OIM/SAD RENBORG

4. COMMENTS: --COMPOSITION OF MISSION: MISSION MEMBERS WERE WELL-CHOSEN AND INTERESTS WELL-INTEGRATED. FOR THE MOST PART, MEMBERS WERE SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THEIR FIRMS, ABLE TO DECIDE ON THE SPOT TO APPOINT AGENTS, SIGN CONTRACTS, OR FOLLOW-UP ON POSSIBLE TRADE OPPORTUNITIES. MANY MEMBERS WERE INTELLECTUALLY AGGRESSIVE AND TECHNICALLY WELL-QUALIFIED; THEIR PENETRATING QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS TO SYRIAN OFFICIALS NOT ONLY SERVED THEIR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS BUT ENABLED ACCOMPANYING EMBASSY OFFICIALS TO ADD SUBSTANTIALLY TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE RATHER ARCANE PETROCHEMICAL AND PETROLEUM SECTORS. FINALLY, COMPLEMENTARY INTERESTS OF MISSION MEMBERS ENCOURAGED THEM TO PROPOSE PACKAGE-TYPE SUGGESTIONS, WHICH IMPRESSED SYRIAN INTERLOCUTORS. IN SUM, WE THINK MISSION MEMBERS WERE UNUSUALLY WELL-CHOSEN AND IMPRESSIVE. MISSION DIRECTOR GEORGE BECK DID GOOD JOB; WE SECOND OBSERVATION IN ABU DHABI 1352 PARA 10 OF EFFICACY OF MISSION DIRECTOR UNDERTAKING ADVANCE WORK.

--DOCUMENTATION: MOST COMPANY LITERATURE (EXCEPT ONE PACKAGE WHICH TURNED UP ONE DAY BEFORE MISSION'S ARRIVAL) RECEIVED BY EMBASSY AND WAS DISTRIBUTED TO SYRIAN OFFICIALS  
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AND BUSINESSMEN WELL IN ADVANCE OF VISIT. BROCHURE WAS WELL-WRITTEN BUT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE IF IT HAD BEEN IN ARABIC AS WELL AS ENGLISH. MANY SENIOR SYRIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MINISTERS OF PETROLEUM AND TF INDUSTRY, AS WELL AS TECHNICAL CADRE (MANY OF THEM TRAINED IN EASTERN EUROPE OR ARAB STATES) DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH. E/C SECTION LOCAL STAFF, WHICH INTERPRETED FOR MISSION, ALTHOUGH ENTHUSIASTIC AND RESOURCEFUL, SIMPLY LACKED TECHNICAL VOCABULARY. WE DO NOT SEE WHY, GIVEN WASHINGTON'S RESOURCES, OFFICIAL BROCHURE OF USDOC TRADE MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST COULD NOT BE RENDERED INTO ARABIC.

--PRESS: "TISHRIN" DAILY MAY 9 GAVE MISSION FOUR PARAGRAPHS OF COVERAGE--UNUSUAL FOR A TRADE MISSION FROM ANY COUNTRY (TRANSLATION POUCH TO USDOC/CAGNE).

--SARG COOPERATION: EXCELLENT, REFLECTED IN FACT MISSION CALLED UPON THREE MINISTERS (ONE OF WHOM HOSTED A DINNER FOR IT.) SYRIAN OFFICIALS VERY FORTHCOMING WITH INFORMATION

ON CHEMICAL AND PETROLEUM INDUSTRIES. TOUR OF HOMS REFINERY GAVE COMOFF FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR EMBASSY OFFICER TO VISIT THIS IMPORTANT FACILITY. VISITS TO OTHER PLANTS AND CALLS ON OFFICIALS NOT INCLUDED IN OFFICIAL PROGRAM WERE EASILY AND QUICKLY ARRANGED.

--PROGRAMMING: INTEGRATED NATURE OF GROUP MADE PROGRAMMING EASIER THAN FOR SOME OTHER MISSIONS IN EMBASSY'S EXPERIENCE. MINECONOMY'S INTEREST IN MISSION TOOK FORM OF HIS SKETCHING OUT PROGRAM HIMSELF, DURING BECK'S ADVANCE VISIT, AND TURNING IT OVER TO MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO COMPLETE. PROGRAM THUS WAS SOMEWHAT OUT OF EMBASSY'S HANDS, WITH RESULT THAT GROUP WAS PROBABLY OVERSCHEDULED WITH CALLS ON OFFICIALS. WE HAD TO CANCEL THREE CALLS BECAUSE OF TIGHT SCHEDULE AND MISSION DISINTEREST, AND SOME MISSION MEMBERS SAID THEY WISHED THEY HAD HAD MORE FREE TIME TO EXPLORE PRIVATE SECTOR CONTACTS DURING VISIT. ANOTHER PROBLEM AROSE WHEN UNCLASSIFIED

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SOME MEMBERS LEFT DAMASCUS EARLY BECAUSE OF OTHER COMMITMENTS. AT ONE LOW POINT MONDAY MORNING, EMBASSY CONTROL OFFICER WAS FACED WITH PROSPECT OF MAKING CALLS ON MINPETROLEUM AND KEY PETROCHEMICAL OFFICIALS (BILLED AS MOST IMPORTANT CALLS OF VISIT) WITH ONLY USDOC MISSION DIRECTOR AND TWO MEMBERS. THREE HAD ALREADY LEFT DAMASCUS, ONE WAS SICK IN BED, FOUR HAD GONE OFF ON INDIVIDUALLY ARRANGED APPOINTMENTS, AND ONE HAD DISAPPEARED. RESPECTABLE DELEGATION WAS PATCHED TOGETHER BY SICK MEMBER'S WILLINGNESS TO JOIN GROUP TO SAVE MISSION'S FACE AND BY COLLECTING EN ROUTE TO MINISTRY OF PETROEUM TWO MORE MEMBERS FROM OTHER APPOINTMENTS. SUCH A SITUATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN AVOIDED HAD THE OFFICIAL TENURE OF THE MISSION BEEN LONGER OR HAD THE GROUP VISITED THREE COUNTRIES INSTEAD OF FOUR, WITH EACH COUNTRY GIVEN AN EXTRA DAY OR TWO FOR SCHEDULING. MURPHY

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